

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
COMMISSIONER'S HEARING ROOM, COUPEVILLE, WA  
MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2015**

	<i>Members Present</i>	<i>Members Absent</i>
<i>District 1</i>	<i>Val Hillers</i>	
	<i>Dean Enell – Vice Chair</i>	
	<i>Karen Krug</i>	
<i>District 2</i>	<i>Jeffery Wallin– Chair</i>	
		<i>George Saul</i>
	<i>Darin Hand</i>	
<i>District 3</i>		<i>Wayne Havens</i>
	<i>Beth Munson</i>	
		<i>Scott Yonkman</i>

Meeting was called to order at 2:08 p.m. by Chair Wallin.

**ROLL CALL**

Dean Enell, Val Hillers, Jeff Wallin, Karen Krug, Beth Munson

Planning and Community staff present: Dave Wechner – Director, Brad Johnson – Long Range Planner, Meredith Penny – Long Range Planner

**ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC**

*Lou Malzone – Freeland Water & Sewer District*

Mr. Malzone presented a Sewer District update. They received the final water infiltration feasibility assessment produced by Pacific Groundwater Group. Their original assessment required testing further out from the infiltration area location. The purchase of the property is contingent upon the feasibility report findings, property performance and obtaining proper permits. The report meets their expectations for the first phase of the sewer project. Agencies will have an opportunity to object the purchase. The grant they have through the Department of Ecology has been extended to January 1, 2017.

Commissioner Krug asked Mr. Malzone if the location will be screened.

Mr. Malzone responded the Planning Department will require screening along the highway.

Commissioner Enell asked if the grant will be used to purchase the property and the cost of the property.

Mr. Malzone responded the grant will pay for the property and it is \$800,000 for the 23-24 acre property.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Planning Commission Workshop** to discuss the existing Comprehensive Plan Goals and policies, and the potential reorganization and reformatting of the Plan.

Chair Wallin read the workshop procedures.

Brad Johnson stated there are three topics to discuss with the Planning Commission.

- General update on the status of the Comprehensive Plan Update in lieu of the Planning Director's Report.
- Introduction of the draft Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan).
- Review the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan and explain the basic organization, the policies and the goals in the current document.

He provided the Planning Commission a detailed work plan that reflects the existing schedule to graphically indicate when work will take place in each of the components of the Comp Plan Update; the tasks follow the Public Participation Plan and preliminary schedule has been revised to reflect the current timelines and deadlines imposed by the Growth Management Act (GMA). June 2016 is the deadline to complete the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Brad Johnson presented an overview of the process for the workshop and the key tasks.

- Critical Areas.
- Urban Growth Areas (UGA) Modifications.
- Freeland Development Regulations.
- Rural Land Use.
- Code and Comp Plan Audit for GMA Compliance.
- Comp Plan Update Reformat.
- Code Update & Clean Up.

Commissioner Krug asked staff how the Rural Land Use task will be addressed.

Brad Johnson responded the objective is to solicit public comment to identify key themes and concerns. Staff is preparing a survey to gauge public concern and distribute the survey to a number of households in the rural areas for each planning area by random selection. They will take the results from the survey, identify topics for further conversation and present them at each public meeting in the planning areas.

Commissioner Krug asked to get a copy of the results from the WSU focus group meetings.

David Wechner stated he would like the Planning Commission members to attend the meeting in their district. It is helpful to have the Planning Commission members present to hear the comments, see the interaction with staff and have a deeper understanding of the issues.

Commissioner Munson suggested to the Planning Commission members to invite their e-mail contact to the meetings.

Planning Commissioners comments:

- Survey should go to those most affected by changes.
- Future rural land uses should also be considered.
- Concerns the amount of surveys being sent may not provide enough public involvement.
- Concern about the size of sample pool and the amount of responses returned.
- Online surveys allow for more participation.

- Public Participation and outreach – making sure there is enough involvement with those who are passionate about the topics and those that are interested.

Commissioner Krug asked staff to provide a schedule of upcoming Planning Commission meetings.

Brad Johnson explained staff did not attempt to identify specific meeting dates since it just creates more confusion. He recommended looking for policy and code development mentioned as a sub task; they indicate a timeframe when meetings will occur for the Planning Commission and Board. He then presented the working draft that was produced by staff. They received a lot of feedback from the Board of County Commissioners (Board) and Planning Commission that the existing Comp Plan is difficult to navigate or understand. Staff has produced a stripped down version that is just the goals and the policies. The idea is to take these in an incremental approach and discuss the individual elements a few at a time.

Meredith Penny further explained the strategy behind the draft provided to the Planning Commission. To create the working draft, she took each element and stripped it down to the most essential components to leave the goals and policies as well as implementation strategies. The main difficulty was to figure out what to include for the Capital Facilities Element and it may take a while to go through. She discussed the following items:

- Countywide Planning Policies – objectives, principles and standards.
- Sample Comprehensive Plans
  - Lewis County, Skagit County, Kitsap County, City of Bellevue, City of Mukilteo

Planning Commissioners made the following comments:

- Commissioner Krug liked the Skagit County example. It had sidebars and was easy for a lay person to understand and navigate. Updating the appendices and maps would allow for easier uploading.
- Commissioner Hillers liked the numbering system Mukilteo uses.
- Commissioner Enell liked the Mukilteo example. It is more accessible and had an implementation strategy. He enjoyed their graphs and presentation.
- Commissioner Krug asked if the history and overview that is available currently will remain.
  - Meredith Penny responded a lot of the background information is required to be included.
- Commissioner Hillers asked if there will be some way for people to jump to the section they want by a search mechanism.
  - Brad Johnson responded staff will try to develop something that has embedded links, to allow for a plain language explanation of what each section contains early in the document.
- Commissioner Enell stated creating a link to particular items that direct you to the specific section of the RCW that requires the need for such changes or how certain goals come about or legally mandated would be helpful.
- Commissioner Munson liked the Mukilteo example which illustrates the acres in each land use designation.

Brad Johnson talked about the Land Use Element and one of its fundamental components. The Land Use Element is the first section of the Comprehensive Plan and it is a really important element because it is fundamental for how the rest of the Plan works. The rest of the elements support the Land Use Element which is intended to be illustrative of what is being achieved as a County with the Comprehensive Plan.

- Currently the Land Use Element is comprised of two sections.
  - Land Use Designations & Designation Criteria.
  - Land Use Policies for Island County.
- Commissioner Krug said it is confusing; policies and criteria should be in the same location.
- Commissioner Munson stated there is a lot of duplication.
- Commissioner Hillers suggested there should be an introduction for each of the different categories of land designation for easier understanding.
- Commissioner Enell said when reviewing the Goals and Policies on page 17 for Land Use, its importance and verbiage should be moved to the front of the land use policy.

Commissioner Krug asked staff if they are currently formatting the Comp Plan and then making substantive changes under the policy development.

Brad Johnson said staff is looking at it as a three step process.

- First step was to turn the Comp Plan into a working draft. Then conduct the formatting changes in order to have that document look like the desired final Comp Plan.
- Second step is to do the Comp Plan audit to identify the absolute minimum changes that have to be made in order to comply with state law.
- The final step is to take the discretionary policy changes that come out of each of the components and incorporate those changes into the working draft and then move to the final adoption phase between December and June of 2016.

Commissioner Krug asked if there will be redlines through the process.

Brad Johnson responded it was another idea that this incremental approach will allow to bring it to the Planning Commission and the Board at each one of the phases and as they move through them they can all say they agree on the changes and allow them to move forward to the next step. A second objective of the project is to get a version of the Comp Plan that everyone agrees is the up to date Comp Plan. The Comp Plan has been revised over the years but there has not been a good process of keeping a record. To really know what the current version of the Comp Plan requires going through all of the Ordinances and Resolutions passed by the Board.

Commissioner Krug asked how it will be done differently in the future.

Brad Johnson responded one approach is to have an official version of the Comp Plan annually rather than just approving the changes. There have been instances where different staff members or members of the public have different versions of the Comp Plan. The Island County Code is not an issue since the Island County Code Reviser maintains the official copy.

Some jurisdictions record it with their Auditor's Office after the annual review is complete, so there is a recorded version of the Comp Plan and no one can argue about it. The Comp Plan online for example had not been updated in a while, changes had been made to it but the online version had not been updated to reflect those changes.

Commissioner Krug asked staff if the appendices approach is selected, would the update occur regularly in an appendix and not in the actual Comp Plan document.

Brad Johnson responded there are a couple of things like the Transportation Improvement Plan, Capital Improvement Plan; those plans are updated annually. If those were in an appendix all that would have to be done is to refer to it in a cross reference in the body of the text. Another example is the population forecast and allocation effort, the updated Countywide Planning Policies lay out a process where that will occur on a reoccurring basis with each periodic update cycle. This time it was noted that there are population numbers that are scattered throughout the document and he thinks they need to be conscience of that.

Commissioner Munson asked if each zoning designation will be formatted the same.

Brad Johnson said the current Land Use Element is good in terms of being internally consistent, but if you go to the Transportation Element or the Parks and Rec Element they all look different and they all have different numbering sequence. That creates problems, the permit review staff frequently has to cite the Comp Plan and in some areas there are policies that do not have numerical references and is difficult to cite.

Commissioner Krug asked when there is conflict between the Comp Plan and the Code; which has priority?

Brad Johnson responded that it has been a subject of legal interpretation. There has been some conflict as to which takes precedence over the other. Island County Code specifies that in the event of a conflict between the Comp Plan and Code, the Comp Plan takes precedence. There is a difference between whether there are conflicting sections. The advice received from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office based on case law is that in those instances the Code takes precedence. When using the Comp Plan to help inform or interpret Code sections that are vague, it is very clear that the Comp Plan takes precedence and should be used to form those interpretations.

Commissioner Enell asked staff if existing master planned resorts are allowed and he made reference to page 3.

Brad Johnson responded that they are not allowed; Camp Casey was originally a master planned resort under the Comp Plan but when the Special Review District section was created, they applied for it and were granted Special Review District status. That is probably a section that could be deleted. It was not intended to accommodate new master planned resorts but just recognize existing ones.

Commissioner Hillers asked staff if they expect the Land Use Element will need the most work in order to get it ready for reformatting.

Brad Johnson responded as Meredith Penny pointed out the Capital Facilities Plan is the one that is difficult and was not put into a working draft. There were entire sections of text that had the important or relevant policy statements or numbers in them and could not be pulled out in an organized fashion. In 1998 when the Comp Plan was adopted, there was preexisting state law that required the preparation of Capital Improvement Plans and Transportation Improvement Plans. It looked like they created a Capital Facilities Element and then merged the two preexisting plans together; this then creates redundant text within the Capital Facilities Element. The good thing about that section is that it is mostly numbers and it is less discretionary.

Commissioner Munson asked if there will be definition clarifications, for example Mixed Use.

Brad Johnson said that it is another consideration. There are instances where there are differences in the definitions that are in the Code and the Comp Plan.

Commissioner Krug said if a definition section is created, they should cross-reference each other to be easier to locate in the document.

Commissioner Enell noted staff has a very comprehensive and logical approach to the document.

Brad Johnson added if the Planning Commission members came across other Comp Plan examples and liked, they can notify staff and they may be able to incorporate some of the changes into the reformatted version of the document.

*Commissioner Enell moved to adjourn, Commissioner Krug seconded, motion carried unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Shaddy